

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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P 220945Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1684

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 7753

EXDIS

DEPT PASS JCS WASHDC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, PK, US

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE VISIT TO US OF PAK AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF

1. MINISTRY OF STATE FOR DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AZIZ AHMED HAS ASKED ME IF WE COULD ARRANGE FOR PAK AIR
FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF ZULFIKAR ALI KHAN TO VISIT THE UNITED
STATES WITHIN THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS. I TOLD HIM
INVITATIONS FOR VISITS OF SERVICE CHIEFS FROM FRIENDLY
NATIONS WERE NORMALLY HANDLED ON A ROUTINE BASIS WITH A
RATHER LONG LEAD TIME SCHEDULE, BUT I WOULD SEE WHAT I
COULD DO.

2. WHILE I RECOGNIZE THAT THE SCHEDULING CONVENIENCE OF
OUR OWN AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF AND JCS MUST OF COURSE
BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN DETERMINING OUR RESPONSE,
I WOULD HOPE THAT WE COULD COMPLY QUICKLY WITH THIS
REQUEST. KHAN IS OBVIOUSLY A COMPETENT AND DEDICATED
PROFESSIONAL AND I AM MUCH IMPRESSED WITH HIM. HE
FEELS KEENLY, OF COURSE, THAT PAKISTAN'S AIR FORCE IS
OBSOLETE AND IN DIRE NEED OF HELP. FURTHER THAN THAT,
HOWEVER, HE OBVIOUSLY FEELS OUT OF DATE HIMSELF IN MERELY
TRYING TO KEEP ABREAST OF MODERN AIR FORCE THINKING AND
TECHNIQUES AS HE HAS NOT MUCH TO GO ON HERE EXCEPT THAT GAINED
FROM HIS AVID READING OF AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS. HE WOULD
OF COURSE WANT THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK ABOUT PAKISTAN'S
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NEEDS WITH THE PENTAGON, INCLUDING THE JCS.

3. KHAN WOULD BE FIRST PAF CHIEF TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES IN THREE AND A HALF YEARS, AND A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE GOP'S DESIRE TO HAVE HIM MAKE THE VISIT WOULD BE MUCH WELCOMED HERE AS AN INDICATION OF OUR CONTINUING INTEREST IN PAKISTAN'S SECURITY CONCERNS. WHILE HE WILL OBVIOUSLY WANT TO PRESS HIS CASE FOR HELP FROM THE MILITARY - WHILE RECOGNIZING AS A PROFESSIONAL THAT FINAL DECISIONS MUST BE MADE BY HIGHER, CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES - HIS DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON WILL GIVE HIM A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMPLEX POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH HAVE SHAPED OUR MILITARY SUPPLY POLICY IN SOUTH ASIA. WE MUST ALSO FACE THE PROBABILITY THAT TO TURN DOWN THE VISIT OR DECIDE ON A LONG POSTPONEMENT WOULD BE LOOKED UPON AS AN UNWILLINGNESS ON OUR PART TO LET THE PAK MILITARY DISCUSS THEIR PROBLEMS WITH OUR OWN SENIOR OFFICERS AND WOULD CAUSE THEM FURTHER DISCOURAGEMENT.

4. IN SHORT, I'D LIKE TO SEE US MOVE AHEAD ON THIS ONE AND WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE AN EARLY FAVORABLE REPLY.
BYROADE

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED.

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